

Chippanée's on the Upswing

By Dawn Leger

New ownership, a new pricing structure with membership incentives, and a new restaurant model that includes access for the public has transformed the venerable private country club with a vibrant and family-oriented growth spurt.

According to the owner's representative, Juan Rodriguez, new ownership of the club rescued the landmark from potential sale to a housing developer after years of declining membership. Fritz Blasius, owner of Blasius Chevrolet in Waterbury, presented the winning bid to the board of directors in December 2014. Through a difficult winter, work began on improvements to the physical plant, including much needed facility upgrades in the lobby and clubhouse areas. To date, major renovations have been done to all areas of the grounds as well as the maintenance of the course itself. But most important, Rodriguez says, is the new approach to membership.

"Since taking over, the average age of the members has probably dropped ten or fifteen years," Rodriguez says. "We're attracting more family members, with more activities for the wives and kids, more social things, and we're doing very well."

Blasius introduced a new membership structure that reduced fees by 25% for the first two years, and included incentives for members who brought their friends to join along with them. Both golfing and social memberships offer different pricing structures for family and single members, junior and senior members, so that Chippanée suddenly became competitive with other area clubs. "The members knew that they were finally going to be able to attract some new members from other clubs," Rodriguez says. To date, the new package has attracted more than 80 new golfing members, and will be offered until June 2016 or when the club reaches its target number, whichever comes first.

Renovations Inside and Out

There is currently work being done to create a huge outdoor patio with a gas fireplace that will create an inviting gathering place for warm evenings, to name just one example. The new ownership team, in conjunction with the board and new committee structure, has promised to do one major project each year, in addition to the upgrades that have taken place throughout the club.

New member and Bristol resident Tyler Stevens, 34, joined with a group of three other families in June 2015. "The family-friendly aspect of the club is what enabled me to join," he says. "If it was just me joining to play golf a couple of times a week, I wouldn't be able to justify the expense. The social activities, the pool, the restaurant, and the other families our age made this an attractive deal for my family."

"The owners are doing a good job making changes that will be attractive to young families."

-Tyler Stevens, new member

Aside from playing golf twice a week, Stevens dines in the restaurant with his family once or twice a month and has attended several club events, including Brunch with Santa and a Kentucky Derby party. His wife and daughter enjoy the pool while he plays golf and eats in the pub with his buddies.

"I know eight other families that joined at the same time as we did," Stevens said. "The club has made this affordable, and it looks like the owners are doing a good job making changes that will be attractive to young families."

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Chippanée Country Club

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Embracing Change

While reviewing this issue of the *BDA Buzz*, I noticed a recurring theme that pops up in just about every story: *transformation*. It starts with the changes happening at Chippanee Country Club. As Dawn Leger reports in this issue's cover story, the Bristol landmark is transforming from an exclusive club reserved for a select few into a more affordable experience for local families. The transformation theme extends to a story by Kristen Gorski highlighting the remarkable relocation and expansion of Redman's Trailer Sales at 120 Terryville Road. Elsewhere, we highlight the transformation of "Brownfield" properties and focus on an effort to transform Bristol's manufacturing workforce from one comprised of those preparing for retirement to young folks embracing high-tech manufacturing as a lucrative and stable career. We also profile Donna Forten, owner of Just for You Too deli at 534 North Main Street, who recently transformed a vacant storefront into a busy "neighborhood eatery."



All the transformation got me thinking of Bristol's own metamorphosis. It may seem far-fetched, but there are several comparisons that can be made between Bristol's "All Heart" marketing and economic development efforts and the positive transformations highlighted in this issue. Similar to Chippanee's redevelopment and the movement to bring younger workers into our manufacturing facilities, the "All Heart" marketing project, in part, is luring younger folks to Bristol's many attractions. Better yet, the marketing campaign seeks to help young families lay down roots by purchasing an affordable home or renting a great apartment in the City.

On the economic development side, the BDA continues to transform the Southeast Bristol Business Park from a sleepy neighborhood of vacant land into a surging area filled with bustling enterprise. Finally, the City's efforts to revitalize downtown into a vibrant, walkable center may be considered our most important transformation to come. The BDA continues to assist in developing "Depot Square" by coordinating a detailed plan for the site that adheres to the downtown vision established by the City's Plan of Conservation and Development. We are marketing the site to both larger developers as well as local, longtime businesses that may be interested in building the facility of their dreams while helping revitalize downtown Bristol.

Justin Malley
Director, Bristol Development Authority

Neighborhood Food "Just for You Too"

By Dawn Leger

A new deli has been packing in the customers on North Main Street since its soft opening in late January. "Just for You Too," located at 534 North Main Street, across from the Polish American Club, features the down-home cooking of experienced restaurateur Donna Forten.

Forten, a Wolcott native whose children and grandchildren live in Bristol, is a huge fan of the City. "I love being here – there are so many great stores, the community is wonderful, the support from the City has been great – and I am close to my grandkids now," she says. "It's a perfect place for me to have my second home."

*"Come to my place and have a cup of tea."
- Donna Forten*

"Home" is how Forten describes her cozy restaurant, located in the first floor of a two-family house. "I say to people, 'come to my place and have a cup of tea,'" she says. "I've always got a pot on."

There is seating for about 10 people, although the bulk of her business is takeout sandwiches and hot paninis. Forten describes her menu as "nothing fancy" and promises to accommodate special requests as much as she can, depending on the press of business at the moment.

A former location – called, not surprisingly, "Just for You" – seated 70 and ended up being too much for Forten to manage when her youngest child was diagnosed with cancer. "I was living in the hospital with him; that was my priority," she says.



Donna Forten of "Just for You Too"

"I decided to scale everything back, because family is more important. This business was created to provide the 'extras' for my kids, and when it started to require more time and energy, I closed up shop."

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Redman's Trailer Sales Expands

By Kristen Gorski

Long-standing Bristol business, Redman's Trailer Sales, recently chose Terryville Road property to support its growth and expansion in the City. "Bristol is home. We didn't think of moving anywhere else," says owner Rob Redman Jr.

Redman's Trailer Sales is a family-owned and operated trailer and recreational vehicle (RV) sales and service business born in Bristol. In 1959, Redman's opened as a service station on Farmington Avenue, on the same piece of land that Yankee Harley-Davidson now calls home. Then in 1997, the long-standing Bristol business relocated to Broad Street, where the owners continued to build their brand.

In 2005, Redman, who began working at Redman's in 1984, purchased the company from his uncle.

*"Bristol is home.
We didn't think of moving anywhere else."
- Rob Redman, Jr.*

This past year, Redman's Trailer Sales was looking to expand to keep up with customer demand. Redman determined that part of the company's expansion plan would require it to move from the one acre property the company had outgrown throughout the years.

During the search for a larger space, Redman toured the former Scalia Brothers' property located at 120 Terryville Road. He determined that the large, 7.5 acre parcel would give the company much needed space to store trailers, RVs, and U-Haul rentals, as well as give them ability to move freely on-site.

To transform the dilapidated, overgrown site into the future home of Redman's Trailer Sales, a great deal of work was needed, including a new roof, new windows, new siding, a complete overhaul of the interior of the building, and more. For the site renovations, Redman chose Bristol-based companies, or companies that were once located in Bristol, to help carry out the vision. The Bristol Development Authority assisted in the façade renovations through the Downtown/West End Façade Improvement Program funded by the State of Connecticut.

In January 2016, nearly five months after purchasing the Terryville Road property, Redman's renovations were complete. "Our new location has been very well received by customers," says Redman, Jr.

Redman's wanted to thank the following companies which made this project a success: Tony Mattioli of Thomaston Savings Bank, Rob Hiltbrand of RR Hiltbrand Engineering and Surveying, Mystique Oil, Exteriors Plus, Masotti Electric, Laforge & Sons Landscaping, Morin Paving, Aldi Fence, and Collision Clinic. ♦



Prior to Renovation



After Renovation



Chippanee's on the Upswing

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A new gazebo area has been added to the front of the property in addition to the enhanced lobby, restrooms, and bridal suite, all with an eye to attracting more wedding bookings in the spring, Rodriguez says. Showers, Bar Mitzvot, and other social events are the focal point of the 200-seat banquet area, but a new management team in the dining room has different aspirations.

Now Serving the Public

Voted "Best Golf Course Restaurant in Bristol" by readers of the Bristol Press in 2014 and 2015, the dining room at Chippanee is now open to the public by reservation only, for limited dinner seating every night. With Chef Ken Neibel and restaurant manager Mike Mastracchio, both graduates of the New York Culinary Institute, dining at Chippanee is a special night out. Traditional American food entrées such as wild mushroom risotto, pan-seared red snapper, and grilled 14 ounce New York strip steak will satisfy any appetite. Prices range from \$19 to \$32. Business casual attire is required in the dining room.

"A club like this adds to the ambiance of the city and helps attract new families thinking about moving here."

- John Leone,

Chippanee member for 30+ years

"Chippanee has one of the best restaurants in Bristol, with awesome food," says John Leone, a longtime club member, former Mayor, and past President of the Greater Bristol Chamber of Commerce. Leone is a regular golfer and has recently recruited another former Mayor, Mike Werner, to join the Club.

"Overall, having a great golf club in town adds a lot to the quality of life that we have to offer in Bristol. Aside from offering people a great educational system and a great community hospital, a club like this adds to the ambiance of the city and helps attract new families thinking about moving here," he says.

Sports are the underpinning of Chippanee, however, and the upgrading of the golf facilities, the pool, and the tennis courts has enhanced an already stellar program to attract more members. Golf Pro Gary Sassu, a fixture at the club for more than 20 years, has been recognized for running the best junior golf program in the state of Connecticut for several years. Tennis Pro Ryan Battisto also offers classes to a wide range of ages and levels of expertise, and individual lessons are available in tennis, golf, and swimming.

During the summer, golf clinics for the youngsters continue to grow in popularity as more families join the Club. "We enjoy the mix of older members and new families coming into the club," Rodriguez says.

Introducing social media, with frequent updates and smart phone apps, has also been important to the outreach to younger members. As John Leone noted, "There's nothing stuffy about Chippanee," and the opportunities to mix it up abound on and off the course.

"Chippanee is one of the best places to play golf in the area," Leone says. "Mike Hamm does a great job keeping the course in shape. It's like a family up there."

Liz Nadeau, a member of the Club for 10 years, concurs. "I love playing golf there, and it would have been a shame to lose the course," she says. "Now it's so nice to see the young families coming in and having a good time."

The new owners are making changes to bring in the next generation as well as keep the membership base happy. Both the long-time members and the new arrivals are taking advantage of the chance to improve one of Bristol's venerable institutions.

With an active social committee bringing new ideas such as movie nights, date nights that offer child care, and an emphasis on recruiting young families, it seems that the Blasius investment in Chippanee Country Club is a hole-in-one. ♦

Information about membership, catering events, and restaurant reservations can be obtained by calling 860-589-5645 or visiting their website, www.chippanee.com.

Neighborhood Food "Just for You Too"

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Her son has recovered from his illness and Donna is back in business, but only to a limited degree. Hours are 10-6 Tuesday through Friday and 10-4 on Saturday, "for now," she says. "We'll see what the spring brings." The hours may change with the warmer weather.

The menu, which is available for catering and takeout, includes two soup choices per day, sandwiches on either a hard roll or a grinder, generous salads (including a taco salad in a house-made taco shell), and a variety of panini sandwiches served with a side and a pickle. Canned

sodas, bottled water, fresh coffee and tea are also served throughout the day.

If you're looking for something fancy, like a cappuccino or smoothie, you're in the wrong place. This is Donna's home, and she'll make you a nice sandwich, just like your mother used to do. Just grab a seat and make yourself comfortable. ♦

Just for You Too – 534 North Main Street – 860-582-1422

AROUND BRISTOL

L&D Designs

L&D Designs, located at 199 Central Street, opened its doors this past fall. It is a retail gift store that specializes in rocks, minerals, crystals, pendants, pocket stones, and healing gifts. Owner Susan Dawiczuk also



hand-makes jewelry which is sold within. Besides her retail store, Susan also offers workshops including "Open Design Night" and "Crystals and Healing."

For more information, please

"like" L&D Designs on Facebook or visit its website at www.l-ddesigns.com.

Hours: Tues 1-6 pm, Thurs 10-6 pm, Fri 10-7 pm, Sat 10-5 pm and Sun 12-4



New England Barber Company

New England Barber Company, located at 409 Broad St. in Forestville, is a "Traditional Men's Barbershop" offering a variety of services from traditional cuts and shaves to tapers, fades, mohawks, and more.



Owner and Bristol native Thomas G. White III opened the shop this past fall. White truly transformed this once vacant



property into an attractive, thriving business.

For more information, please "like" New England Barber Company on Facebook or call (203) 707-4936. Hours: Tues-Fri 10-7 pm and Sat 9-4 pm

The Scrappy Owl

The Scrappy Owl, owned by Stephanie Divito, is a high-quality design and production studio whose focus is creating eye-catching graphics for apparel and other textiles. It specializes in creating unique scrapbook page kits, and personalized, custom designs for events, businesses, parties, and more.

For more information, please "like" The Scrappy Owl on Facebook, visit its website at www.thescrappyowl.com or email info@scrappyowl.com.



DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Brownfields Moving Forward

Brownfields are properties that have been contaminated by industrial waste and abandoned or underutilized due to the high cost of cleanup. The Federal government has been helping to assess and clean properties for the past 20 years. Since 2011 the State of Connecticut has expended significant funds in assessment and cleanup grants through the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD).

The City of Bristol has received several assessment grants for work that is ongoing at 894 Middle Street. This 14-acre parcel was previously the site of a metal refinishing business, and early findings have shown the presence of multiple contaminants in the ground. The location of the parcel on a busy gateway makes it an important site for cleanup and economic development. At the conclusion of the assessment, a plan for cleanup of the contaminants will be presented to DECD, the State's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), and the U.S. EPA. At that time, the City will apply for grant funding to cover the cost of the removal and/or capping of contaminated soils.

In late February, the City learned that it had been awarded \$50,000 to perform a Phase III assessment at 273 Riverside Avenue (the former J.H. Sessions & Sons factory). Because there is a structure involved, and the City does not own the property, the decision about how to clean it and its future use is more nuanced.

Standards for residential versus commercial reuse of contaminated properties differ, as do the options for remediation. In some cases, demolition of heavily contaminated areas is best, while in others the removal of contaminated materials can be safely performed.

For both parcels, once the data collection is complete, a determination will be made about the best course of action for the optimal outcome, which is to put the property back into productive use while protecting the health of the entire community. These older, polluted properties pose a health risk that needs to be addressed; they also present an opportunity for economic development in terms of tax revenue and business growth that no City can afford to overlook.

StartUP Bristol Succeeds



Adam Lazar of Asarasi Inc.

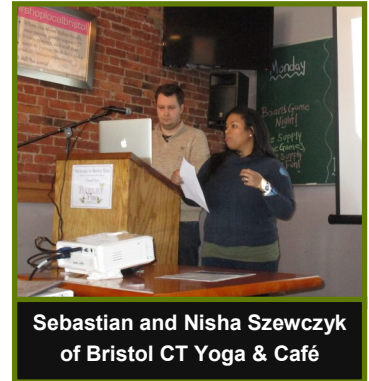
The BDA is pleased to announce that the inaugural StartUP Bristol business plan competition has resulted in three companies receiving awards to locate and/or expand in Bristol. The StartUP Bristol Committee selected the following companies to receive grant awards: Asarasi Inc., Krust Pizza & Bourbon Bar,

and Bristol CT Yoga & Café. Asarasi and Krust were selected to receive \$22,500 each to locate in Bristol. Bristol CT Yoga & Café, already flourishing at 948 Terryville Avenue in Bristol, earned \$5,000 to expand.

StartUP Bristol was launched in 2015 to reach entrepreneurs across the state who may be interested in locating their businesses in the "All Heart City." Applicants had the opportunity to win up to \$30,000 each, with a total of \$50,000 available. The City received 35 applications for funding following a marketing campaign that included Facebook ads, radio spots, and other promotions. The StartUP Bristol Committee pared those applications down to 11 companies that were invited to submit full business plans and other company information. Finalists gave live presentations to the StartUP Bristol Committee as well as a crowd of lenders, local and State officials, and other interested parties who support economic development in the region.

To learn more about the winning companies, visit them at

www.asarasi.com,
www.krustpizzabar.com,
and
www.bristolctyoga.com.



Sebastian and Nisha Szewczyk
of Bristol CT Yoga & Café



Kevin Wirtes and Rich Garcia of
Krust Pizza and Bourbon Bar

Supporting a New Generation of High-Tech Employees

As the school year winds down, several area manufacturers and organizations are supporting a variety of efforts to encourage more young people to consider high-tech manufacturing, engineering, and similar careers.

For more than 60 years, Rowley Spring and Stamping on Redstone Hill Road has continued to emphasize the importance of bringing in young talent as older employees retire. When Stan Bitel, the company's founder, passed away recently, a scholarship program was established in his honor by Bitel's daughters and the company's president, John Dellalana. The Stan P. Bitel Memorial Fund is open to graduating high school students, enrolled secondary students, or adult learners interested in skilled training for the manufacturing sector.

Bristol Adult Education will continue to offer the "AEDAC" program to train adult learners on manufacturing fundamentals. In the classroom, students learn measuring, blueprint reading, and other essential skills. Students also

REAL ESTATE CORNER



For Sale

10 North Main Street/4 Riverside Avenue

Contact: Ian Hunt at 860-249-6521

Stoney Brook Commons consists of two net-leased office buildings downtown. The properties are located along high traffic areas near the location of future downtown development.



For Sale

780 Farmington Avenue

Contact: Joel Witkiewicz at 860-585-5635

This attractive, well-maintained medical office also boasts two second floor one-bedroom apartments. The property is located on busy Route 6 and has a large parking area in the rear.

For Sale

665 Terryville Avenue

Contact: O.V. Snow at 860-589-5492

Listed for \$214,000, this updated medical office was built in 1986 and measures approximately 1,400 square feet.



For Sale

270 Riverside Avenue **Contact:** Joel Witkiewicz at 860-585-5635

This three unit retail/commercial building is located on busy Route 72 leading into downtown. Each unit measures 1,600 square feet, and they can be combined. The property boasts both front and rear parking.

For Lease

1290 Farmington Avenue **Contact:** Matt Halprin at 860-529-9000 x 105

Located along busy Route 6 between Walmart and ShopRite supermarket is 2,000 to 4,000 square feet available for lease. The plaza also houses Eblens and Cherry Berry retail stores.



For Lease

50 Emmett Street

Contact: Vance Taylor at 860-482-9695

A total of 40,000 square feet of space is available for lease, with a minimum divisible area of 3,000 square feet. Current lease rate is \$3.95/square foot per year.



To see more, visit "Available Properties" at www.bristolct.gov/BDA

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORNER

Marketing Residential Rehabilitation

By Debra Shapiro

Recently, the Bristol Development Authority sent information about the Residential Rehabilitation Program to Realtors. The intention is to offer Realtors an additional “tool in the toolbox” when marketing a property. For example, if a listing is in need of a new roof, it may be appropriate for Realtors to urge potential homeowners to contact the BDA to learn more about obtaining grant funds. Our goal is to help reduce the amount of unsold residential property while promoting owner occupancy. Realtors, after all, are instrumental in helping to bring new folks into the community. These new “Bristolites” may volunteer for worthy causes, patronize our wonderful businesses, and give back to the community in other ways.



Coincidentally, one Realtor had just learned about an elderly relative with a malfunctioning boiler. The boiler was original to the house, built in 1960! When this gentleman's house started to get cold, he would go into the basement to reset the boiler. This would happen multiple times during the day and night. He thought he'd have to endure this hardship because he has extremely low income. At the inspection, John Neveu of the BDA further found that the homeowner had been operating a wood stove using the same chimney as the boiler - a situation that could have become hazardous. The wood stove was removed when the new boiler was installed.

This is only one situation where marketing may have worked to help avert disaster, and one of the reasons why the Housing Rehabilitation Program is often featured in the *BDA Buzz*. So many Bristol residents may qualify for assistance with major projects to ensure their home is safe. Every rehabilitation project also helps to maintain the value of housing and good neighborhoods.

So far this year, BDA has worked with 32 homeowners on 45 rehabilitation projects. Projects included helping with the costs to replace six heating systems, nine roofs, and the homeowner portion of three failed water lines and four obstructed sewer pipes. The Residential Housing Rehabilitation Program provides grants up to \$5,000 for owner-occupied single family homes and up to \$1,500 for each additional unit of an owner-occupied multifamily dwelling. The grants are available to fund 50% of the cost of eligible home improvements, including new roofs, new HVAC systems, new energy efficient windows, and more. Homeowners must meet certain criteria to participate, including household income requirements.

If you own and occupy your home, including having residence in one unit of a multi-family home, consider giving BDA's John Neveu a call at 860-584-6189 to see if you qualify. ♦



DEVELOPMENT NEWS

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receive hands-on training within a manufacturing environment on the types of machines they will encounter in the field. Larry Covino, Director of Bristol Adult Education, recently spearheaded an effort to combine funding from the Central Connecticut Chambers of Commerce, New England Spring and Metalstamping Association, Main Street Community Foundation, City of Bristol, Bristol Board of Education, and CT Department of Labor. The effort is truly a public-private partnership, with various manufacturers, non-profits, and local/state government chipping in to ensure Bristol's reputation for having a strong manufacturing workforce continues into the next generation.

The Arthur G. Russell Co. (AGR) is currently sponsoring a Robotics Team (www.peacce.org), which includes students from several area high schools. According to David Aquilino of AGR, the longtime Bristol manufacturer opened its sprawling campus to the group, has supplied mentors to

the students, and contributes supplies and materials to the effort. “The goal of the program, Aquilino notes, “is to build a robot for the FIRST Robotics competition in the spring.”

